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The Role of the Headteacher in Pakistan

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Introduction

Little has been written, and even less research undertaken, on the role of the headteacher in developing countries. In part no doubt this is because much of the educational reform effort in many countries has been concerned more with macro top-down system-wide change with its emphasis on the disciplines of planning and finance than with micro-change with a clearly managerial emphasis. Also, though, there is often the presumption that within the, often highly bureaucratised, educational systems of many developing countries the role of the headteacher is relatively insignificant. He or she is essentially a functionary operating at a fairly low level within a multi-layered hierarchy; the main levers of change lie elsewhere.

This view, however, is no longer tenable, if it ever was. There is increasing recognition that school improvement requires effective management at the level of the school, not least because of the negative power of those close to the point where policies are expected to have their impact. Increasingly, however, more positive reasons for giving greater attention to school-level management are being put forward. Effective educational change, it is argued, must be grounded in local needs and be responsive to local demands. This means that educational systems must be decentralised, and decentralisation inevitably brings the focus of change closer to the headteacher (Chapman and Burchfield, 1994).

This paper concerns a collaborative research project which is currently being undertaken by faculty from universities in the United Kingdom and in Pakistan. The focus of the research emerged from a common interest in the two universities in processes of education management and leadership in the context of change. In particular, a key purpose of the Institute for Educational Development at the Aga Khan University in Karachi is the

promotion of school improvement through enabling both teachers and headteachers to become effective change agents. The achievement of such an aim depends in part on developing an understanding of Pakistani schools as organizations, of the wider system within which they operate, and of the levers which are, or might be, available to teachers and heads to facilitate change within this context. The research reported here concerns the second of these groups — headteachers.

The initial aim of the research is to develop an understanding of the role of the secondary headteacher in Pakistan and of the ways in which the role varies across different local contexts. On the basis of this it is hoped to explore the ways in which headteachers, do and might, contribute to the change process; and then to identify how management training and development might help to improve the effectiveness of headteachers.

The research is being supported by an Academic Link funded by the British Council and is at an early stage. This paper outlines the conceptual framework being developed to underpin the study, describes some of the methodological issues which are emerging for members of a bi-cultural research team who spend most of their time 3,000 miles apart and reports some early findings.

The Context

Although concerned in principle with the role of the headteacher in Pakistan, the initial stages of the research are being limited for practical reasons to schools in Karachi. Karachi, the largest city in Pakistan with a population of about 12 million, is the capital of Sindh province and was the capital of Pakistan until the 1960s. Among other characteristics, it has an international airport, two seaports and a network of educational institutes and industry which together offer many job opportunities and attract migrants from less developed areas of the four provinces of Pakistan. It is considered to be a 'gateway' to Asia and a 'mini' Pakistan in that it portrays a variety of cultural and ethnic dimensions. For the last couple of years the situation in the city has become uncertain and unstable through tensions associated with this diversity.

The Educational Department of Sindh province holds responsibility for the education sector under the Directors and District Education Officers (DEOs) of Primary and Secondary Education. At the District level, there is a separate male DEO for boys' schools and female DEO for girls' schools.

The majority of schools in Karachi are operated by the provincial government, but Karachi Municipal Corporation (KMC) also operates some primary and secondary schools which charge nominal fees like government

schools. The government also encourages the establishment of 'private' educational institutes which provide education on a fee-paying basis. Within the private sector there is a variety of types of school, including those run by trusts, by community and non-government organizations and by private individuals and companies. Most of them follow their own curriculum up to grade 8 (14 years of age), thereafter switching to the national curriculum in order to prepare their students for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination conducted by the State-owned Board of Secondary Schools Examinations.

Conceptualising the Headteacher's Role

The key assumption of the research is that the role of the headteacher can only be fully understood within its own particular context. Many discussions about the role of the head in developing countries tend to be built upon models developed in the West, rather than upon any systematic consideration of the role as it is actually played out in specific national contexts (Harber and Dadey, 1993). Our research does not take this position. Neither, however, does it assume that generalisations can be made about the role in developing countries in general or, indeed, across one country as a whole. Our initial hypothesis is that contextual factors will influence the nature of headship in Pakistan, and indeed in Karachi, as they will elsewhere.

In attempting to understand the ways in which contexts may differ, we have found Rosemary Stewart's (1982) approach to the analysis of management roles particularly helpful in organizing our thinking. Stewart suggests that a manager's job can be defined in terms of three variables: demands — 'what anyone in the job has to do'; constraints — 'the factors, internal or external to the organization, that limit what the jobholder can do'; and choices — 'the activities that the jobholder can, but does not have to do' (Stewart, 1982, p. 2).

Stewart suggests that demands are of two kinds — 'having to do certain kinds of work and the overall satisfying of certain criteria' (p. 3). Constraints are more varied, including for example, physical, resource and technological limitations, organizational constraints and the attitudes of other people. Stewart's discussion seems ambiguous in relation to the status of demands and constraints. Some appear to be relatively objective — for example the constraint of available resources or the demands of required bureaucratic work such as preparing budgets, authorising expenditure, and carrying out staff appraisals. It is clear, however, that many demands and constraints arise from the expectations of others and their power to enforce these expectations on the manager. The effect on

managerial behaviour, however, will depend upon the manager's perceptions about such things. Indeed, it might be argued that all demands and constraints, insofar as they determine the actions of individual managers, are filtered through the perceptions of the individual. Some headteachers, for example, may pay much more attention to formal rules than do others, and different heads may respond in quite different ways to essentially the same resource scenario.

The areas of choice available to a manager, then, depend on the nature of the demands and constraints under which he or she operates; and the manager's actions will be strongly influenced by his or her perceptions of these things. Choice will be maximised when both demands and constraints are minimised. Because of the complexities discussed above, we have decided to explore areas of choice at two levels: the managerial context within which the headteacher works and those personal characteristics which determine how he or she perceives and responds to that context.

In relation to context, we have tentatively identified two major areas here for initial study. The first is the school system in which a head works. There is a variety of such systems in Pakistan, and they further vary in their characteristics among very diverse provinces of the country. The majority of the schools are government schools, but there is a large and growing non-government sector comprising a variety of school systems and individual schools ranging from elitist institutions modelling themselves on the English public school to small entrepreneurial and community-based operations operating from private houses. It is to be expected that different systems, operating under different pressures (for example, in terms of commercial competition or differing community expectations), would generate very different expectations of the headteacher. A particular aspect of these differences which interests us relates to the formal requirements of the job. Most of these school systems have formally-stated rules and regulations, of which three dimensions are likely to be the most significant:

- is there an authoritative statement of the role, such as a formal job description and what does it contain?
- what formal powers and headteachers granted, in relation, for example, to staff appointments and deployment or financial control?
- what reporting requirements are placed on headteachers and what accountability mechanisms are they subject to?

In addition, however, there may be less formal expectations which differ between systems, for example in relation to which aspects of the role are to be emphasised or whether risk-taking is to be rewarded or punished.

...to understand how significant these factors are, how far they differ between systems and how much influence they have on the headteacher's perception of his or her role.

The second contextual factor is the school context itself. Even within the same system, school may differ significantly, thus presenting particular challenges for their heads. Two inter-related questions are relevant here. The first concerns the expectations which key stakeholder groups have of the school and of the headteacher. We have identified four main groups: those to whom the head is formally accountable, such as education officers or the managers of the school system within which the school is situated; members of the schools' staff; parents, and the wider community; and pupils. We need to understand how influential these groups are, the nature of their expectation, and how they are interpreted by the headteacher. The second question concerns the characteristics of the school itself. As might be expected, there are enormous differences between schools in Karachi. Some secondary schools are self-contained, while some are simply sections of all-through primary/secondary schools. There are boys' schools, girls' schools and mixed schools. The socio-economic background of students and parents varies from the rich Westernised elite to the very poor and the often unemployed. Some schools are situated in areas where political conflict and violence is rife; for others this is not the case. Such differences have enormous implications for the particular problems which schools face, the pressures which are placed on headteachers, and the strategies which may be available to tackle them.

There is, of course, a wider contextual factor: that of the national culture of Pakistan. It is increasingly recognised that cultural differences have a profound effect on management (Hofstede, 1980; Hampden-Turner, 1991). The culture of Pakistani society establishes norm: and expectations which have a powerful influence at all levels in society and hence are likely to have a significant effect on the behaviour of heads and those with whom they interact (Ali, *et al.*, 1993). Often such influences are taken for granted in studies which operate within the context of a single culture. We hope that the cross-cultural backgrounds of the researchers will mean that this is not the case here.

The study of such contextual factors should take us some way in exploring the choices available to the headteacher in a particular school at a particular time. However, it will not on its own to explain the choices which he or she actually makes. To do this, as has already been implied, it is also necessary to explore how heads perceive the demands and constraints upon them and the implications of these perceptions for the actions they choose to take (or not to take). Important questions here include:

- what factors in their environment do heads see as significant sources of demands and constraints and why?
- what kinds of actions do they feel are required of them as a result of the demands and constraints as they see them?
- how much freedom of action, in what areas, do they feel that they have, and how do they choose to use this?
- do they feel they can influence any of the demands and constraints and, if so, how?

Such an exploration would be necessary to explain why heads in similar situations may have very different perceptions of the pressures under which they operate and hence choose to enact their role in different ways. How far are heads in Pakistan able to express their individuality within their role? Do they express themselves mainly in terms of superficial matters such as appearance and personal style, or are they able to express themselves in ways which impact significantly on the character of their schools? In either case, what determines their personal approach? Is it personal or educational values and ideals? Is it the pursuit of status or other forms of reward? Is it the search for a quiet and secure life? In exploring these questions, we need to introduce a final set of factors: those relating to the personal history, characteristics and values of the heads themselves.

Let us now look at the area of choice in more detail. What kinds of choices might heads have? Stewart identifies two major areas of choice: choice in what work is done and choice in how it is done. In relation to the former, a number of approaches is possible. One is to categorise the main components of the headteacher's role. Many approaches are available here, from the widely used distinction between the instructional/educational leader and chief executive/managerial roles to more complex formulations (Leithwood, *et al.* 1994, pp. 11-12). One study undertaken in a developing country context suggests four main 'roles' within the school: school management, instructional supervision, school-community relationships and school-Ministry communications (Chapman and Burchfield, 1994). Another uses five rather different categories: management of staff, external relations, managing boarding, pupil control and discipline and 'any other business' which is taken to include curriculum matters (Dadey and Harber, 1991; Harber and Dadey, 1993). If such categorisations are to be used, however, it does seem important that they derive from research data and not the other way round. Harber and Dadey's clearly do: they reflect for example, the fact that many African secondary schools are boarding schools, that pupil discipline is often a serious issue because of the age of 'pupils' and the political pressures often placed on schools, while 'instructional

leadership' is rarely seen as significant 'in countries with a centrally defined national curriculum, and in the light of everything else a head has to do (Harber and Dadey, p. 159).

It may well be that some of the themes emerging for this African research will be replicated in Pakistan. However, we do not yet know. It is better to let such categories emerge from the research rather than being imposed at the outset. On the other hand, we are not just interested in the head's role as it is. We also wish to explore the role as it might be if heads were to become more active in the process of educational change. It is important, therefore, that we explore not just why heads do what they do, but also why they do not do other things. It may be, for example, that the existence of a national curriculum does not necessarily prevent heads from undertaking instructional leadership roles; it is simply the heads' own construction of the demands and constraints which are placed on them which prevents them from doing so.

Of course, neither the context within which heads work nor the ways in which they perceive and play their roles will be static. Situations change, people change; and situations and people interact. The nature of the change, however, and the degree to which heads see themselves is able to influence or control change processes will vary. The hierarchical model of school management alluded to earlier tends to imply an educational change process driven from the centre with heads—and others at the school and community levels—acting as passive implementers (eg. Warwick, *et al.*, 1992). The change model advocated by most educational reformers is very different, given a much more active role to those working at the level of the school. It is important, therefore, to find ways of identifying the kinds of changes which are taking place in the Pakistan educational system and, in particular to explore the role which heads do, and might, play in these. What are the implications of the contexts within which heads work, and their perceptions of the demands and constraints to which these contexts give rise, for the levers which heads do or might use to contribute to the improvement in their schools?

The working model on which the initial phase of our research is based is outlined in Annex 1. The following section explores some of the issues of methodology.

Methodology

Designing a methodology to cope with the potential complexity of the factors which influence the choices which heads make and the actions which they take is not easy. Ribbins (1994; Ribbins and Marland, 1995) suggests that accounts of headship need to take account of context in three

main ways. First, the views and actions of headteachers must be examined across a representative range of issues and events to reflect the complexity of the worlds in which they work. Secondly, the views of significant others must be taken into account, not just those into account, not just those of the headteachers themselves, since roles are enacted within a context of interaction which generates a variety of perspective. Thirdly, the headteachers must be observed in action: we need to be at least as interested in which headteachers do as what they say they believe in or intend.

We agree with all of this. However, it has been necessary to focus our research. We have decided initially to explore the perceptions of the headteacher's role which are held by heads and by their managers. This has been done as follows:

1. A sample of six schools has been chosen representing a variety of school systems¹
2. In depth interviews have been conducted with the headteacher of each school to explore how heads see their role, and in particular
 - * what aspects do they consider most important and why?
 - * what do they see as their main areas of freedom and constraint?
 - * what problems and dilemmas do they see in performing their role?
3. Shorter interviews are being conducted by school system managers to explore their expectations of the head and of the school.

In addition documentary analyses are being undertaken to gather information about the formal requirements of the various school systems within which the heads work. The fieldwork is at an early stage, but already a number of interesting methodological issues have arisen.

Sample Selection

Secondary schools in Karachi vary enormously in size, patterns of organization and control. However, there is no systematic information base from which any kind of representative sample might be obtained. There was a very strong case for building on relationships already established by the IED with certain schools. Consequently the six schools were chosen through a combination of the following processes:

- * selecting mainly from the 14 schools which have sent teachers of the IED's MEd programme²
- * not selecting schools where it was known that co-operation for a study of this kind was not likely to be forthcoming or would be difficult to achieve
- * subject to the above, selecting schools which represented a variety of forms of control and which were located in different parts of Karachi

(and hence operating in different socio-economic contexts). Schools were also selected to ensure a balance in terms of the gender of pupils and heads.

This process has resulted in some lack of representativeness in the sample. For example, government schools are under-represented in relation to the number in the total population of schools and there is no genuine community school in the sample.

Gaining Entry

Despite the IED researchers' personal acquaintance with the headteachers of the six schools, it is essential within a Pakistani context that great care is taken with the formalities of negotiating entry. Thus a letter was written to the Directors of School Education for the government schools, and the private management for the other schools detailing the purpose of the study and the tasks involved in collecting information. After written permission was received, the schools were approached by the researchers who informally explained the outline of the study to the headteachers. The timetable for interviews and data collection was then prepared in consultation with the head. In each case the headteacher expressed full willingness to be involved in the study. However, the fact that formal permission was in each case given by managers external to the school does raise the possibility that some were responding to the expectations of their superior rather than of their own volition.

Status Issues

In all cultures, researching people holding positions of power presents particular difficulties. The need of such people to present an image of personal control can often raise particular difficulties in assessing the validity of interview data. In our research this general problem was compounded by a number of other factors. The interview situation was in general a new experience for heads and managers, and cultural factors in Pakistani society as well as those arising from the research context have potentially complex implications for the interactions in interview.

Within the Pakistani cultural context formal status is important. Heads are important people, although their formal status varies in different school contexts, with different degrees of subordination to superior managers within the school system. However, academic researchers also have considerable status which may or may not be perceived as greater than that of the head in particular circumstances. The actual status relationship in a

particular situation depends on a complex interaction between perceived formal status and other variables, such as age, experience, seniority, gender and ethnicity. For example, while women in general are expected to defer to men, older women can expect to be treated with particular respect by men including those who may be formally their seniors. Again, responses may vary according to the ethnic background of the parties involved. The fact that the two Pakistani researchers in the team have different mother tongues and the other two team members are non-Pakistanis from a very different cultural background may well have affected responses, not least in the former case because both of the Pakistani researchers, and much of their personal histories, were personally known to all the headteachers interviewed.

The issue of relative status, therefore, arose powerfully in each interview and may have affected the quality of some of the responses received.

Framing the Questions

Developing an interview schedule which would address the conceptual issues with which we were concerned did not prove easy. In the first place some of the key concepts themselves are not easy. For example, there is no clear Urdu equivalent to the term 'role' making this a difficult idea to use in either English or Urdu. Furthermore, our framing concepts of 'demands, constraints and choices' are not easy to describe simply. Secondly, some respondents seemed to find it quite difficult to reflect on the nature of their job, so that there was a constant danger of our receiving the 'official' line about headship rather than an authentic description of the role as experienced by the interviewees. (This is a separate issue from that of whether they would choose to share their reflections with us.) Experience has led us to adapt and, in particular, to shorten the schedule, but we remain concerned that some of the information we have gained to date has an air of superficiality about it.

Language

This was a particularly problematic issue. Not all the interviewees were confident in their use of English and two of the research team did not understand Urdu. Ideally, perhaps, all the interviews should have been conducted in Urdu. However, the British members of the team wanted to be involved in the interview process as equal partners. The solution was to share the interviews among team members, to ensure that British researchers were accompanied by a Pakistani colleague when interviewing and for the British researchers to interview only those heads who felt

comfortable with English. The pairing of interviewers also enabled one to ask the questions and operate the recorder while the other took notes. All interviewees were given the opportunity of answering questions in Urdu or in English. This choice, however, could be construed by the respondents as reflecting on their competence: in at least one case the choice was made to respond in English when Urdu would clearly have been more appropriate while in others we felt that the substance of the interviews would have been richer if the respondent's mother tongue had been used. Of course, responses in Urdu led to transcripts which needed to be translated into English—a further difficulty dealt with below.

Transcription

We sought permission from the interviewees to record the interviews, both for the usual reasons of maximising amount of data captured and also to ensure that we would all have the opportunity to learn from all the interviews. Only one of the headteachers refused permission, although some of the others occasionally asked for the tape to be turned off on a number of occasions. Arrangements were made to transcribe the tapes, which proved to be far more difficult than envisaged. Transcription is a particular skill: inaccurate transcription of inaccurate English produces some unusual scripts! When those tapes also have to be translated, additional skills are necessary which we found were not easily available. It is true to say that translation and transcription provided us with some of our greatest and unforeseen difficulties.

Practicalities

An underlying issue has been the practicality of working together as a team. It was crucial to spend considerable time together on the first link visit in Sheffield, not only to plan and prepare the route of the research, but also to get to know one another as people and build relationships based on trust and respect. The different contexts within which we normally work bring richness to our discussions, but we know we have constantly to check our assumptions of particular terms and issues in order to avoid misunderstandings. The visits to Karachi have been frenetic as these are the only opportunities to carry out fieldwork together.

Government and Non-Government Schools: Similarities and Differences

All the headteachers in the sample are experienced. With one exception, all have been heads in their present schools for between six and ten years, and the other head (of non-government school C) held senior position in Pakistan and overseas before being appointed to her headship. Three of the sample had held headships in other schools previously. However, the government and non-government heads reached their present positions through very different routes. All the government heads had received promotion on the basis of seniority, and one (school F) is still an 'in charge' head after nearly 10 years in post. In contrast, none of the non-government heads was appointed on seniority: one (school A) literally succeeded to the headship after a number of years working closely as deputy to her predecessor, who began the school; one (school B) was 'head hunted' from another school specifically to cope with discipline problems at the school; and the third (school C) was appointed through open competition. Only one of the heads (school C) was given a job description of appointment, and all claim to have learned the job through experience and, in some cases, working with an admired role model.

A further difference between the government and non-government schools is that heads of the latter are, in fact, principals, who have overall responsibility for schools comprising pupils with a wide age-range including both the primary and secondary years. In each case, sub-sections of the schools (always the primary years but sometimes the secondary years as well) are the responsibility of a 'head' or 'deputy head' who works under the principal. In contrast, the three government schools are free standing secondary schools with the head in overall charge.

The Governance System

Both government and non-government schools are subject to accountability through external management structures. However, the nature of demands and constraints which are placed on heads by the systems in which their schools are situated is different. Government schools operate within the complex bureaucratic system of the Sindh civil service. The non-government schools, in contrast, are responsible to boards of trustees. There are real differences in the power granted to heads in government and non-government schools. Government heads' powers are severely limited by the rules of the system and this is often felt strongly: 'I consider myself only a chowkidar [doorman]' (head of school E). All the non-government heads in our sample, in contrast, are granted considerable managerial

freedom. They see their boards as 'marvellous employers' (A) who are 'understanding and supportive' (C). Unlike some government heads, they generally feel that their managers are working with, rather than against, them.

It is important, however, that, in emphasising these very real differences between powers granted to the government and non-government heads in our sample, we do not imply that there are no differences among schools within each of the sectors. This is certainly not the case. First, different approaches may be taken by the specific managers to whom the school is accountable. One government head, for example, recognised that she may have some influence over decisions which affect her school, although the degree of this influence depends very much on the approach taken by the particular education officer to whom she relates; and it is clear from the interviews that, while all the managements of non-government schools in our sample give their heads a good deal of freedom, they do exert pressures, whether this be to discourage dance lessons for girls (school A) or to co-opt the heads into fairly managerialist approaches to school management (school C).

Secondly, it is clear that each head manages the relationship with his or her 'governors' in a unique way which reflects his or her personal characteristics and history. Among the government heads for example, one seems to see the relationship as one of constraint and potential conflict ('In our system the teachers are not fired; the headmaster is fired for everything' [E]), while another seems primarily concerned with keeping the books straight because she is near retirement and any financial mismanagement could affect her pension ('I see my role more as accountant rather than administrator or academic' [F]). It takes a head with particular personal characteristics—such as the very senior and experienced woman head with a strong personality in our sample (school D)—even to begin to challenge these constraints: this head is not afraid to defy the office or use the system in particular cases, for example in refusing to release a teacher or seeking teachers on 'detailment' from schools which are overstaffed. It is probably no coincidence that the first head (E) has been transferred, the second (F) has been in an acting capacity for 12 years, while the third (D) has been a substantive head for many years and is near retirement.

The Community Context

The nature of the school systems in which they work, of course, are not the only sources of demands and constraints for heads. Every school context is unique in constellation of stakeholder characteristics and expectations which it faces. We have identified three dimensions of this context

which seem significant for our schools. First, the nature of the student body is important. For example, it seems to be generally recognized in Karachi that boys can create significant discipline problems whereas 'girls are easily manageable' (A). This may have important implications for heads who see themselves as having an important role to play directly with students: 'My door is never shut and the children are always welcome to come' (A) and 'I am mother, sister, aunt' (D). Clearly the head's own personal characteristics, management style and priorities are important here—it may be significant that the three women heads in the sample expressed these kinds of comments.

A second set of pressures arise from the nature of the community in which the school is located. As elsewhere, schools in Karachi differ in the social background of the majority of students and, consequently, the 'status' which the school is seen to have by those outside. One of our schools is an 'elite' school: although part of its mission is to provide opportunity for poorer members of the community it serves, its facilities and exam results put it in great demand by the city's upper middle class. This creates enormous pressures for entry, some of which occur through overt political influence. For this head, the pressure arising at admissions time is 'a terrible thing... we suffer very much' (A) and is clearly her biggest concern. For others the issues are different. Another non-government school is unable to fill its places because potential students from its poorer catchment area cannot meet its admission requirements, especially in relation to English, and admissions seem less of an issue for government schools, although the most proactive of the three government heads interviewed was proud of her achievements in increasing her school's strength. Parental pressure once the children have been admitted seems relatively unproblematic for any of the heads. Only one of the non-governmental schools has a parent-teacher association, and while these have recently been mandated for government schools, they seem to be fairly ineffectual. The heads were able to identify issues which concerned parents, including difficulty with the payment of fees, complaints about teachers (mainly in government schools), and issues relating to the promotion of children between classes, but the main feeling from all the interviews was of a situation where parent-teacher relationships were led from the school.

Demands, Constraints and Choice: Managing Teachers

A common concern for all the heads we interviewed was the issue of teacher quality. In the non-government schools there was the view that 'if a teacher leaves for some reason, it becomes very, very difficult to get somebody appropriate, that has become a major headache' (school A).

Of course, government schools do not have the luxury of recruiting their own staff. For them, the key issue is the quality of teachers in post: concerns were expressed about teachers who were 'lazy and not dutiful' (school E), with a general feeling—which non-government heads shared—that 'the quality is falling . . . the new generation is not committed' (school F). It seemed clear that inefficient or unmotivated teachers were in a minority in all the schools, but they were a concern of heads everywhere.

The ability to manage their staff is perhaps the most significant area in which powers differ between heads of government and non-government schools. All the non-government heads in our sample have significant powers over the appointment of teaching staff—a task which they take very seriously—as well as being able to influence the salaries paid to particular teachers. Government heads have none of these powers: the allocation of teachers to their schools as well as transfers out are determined either in the office of the Director of Education or in the District Education Office. This lack of power of government heads to influence the composition of the teacher establishment—as well perhaps as the general culture of the government in Sindh—seems to affect their general attitude to the management of staff. There is an emphasis on their inability to get rid of poor teachers—'We cannot change them easily if a teacher is performing badly (school F)—and on issues of control—'Sometimes warning, sometimes checking, sometimes punishment' (school E). In contrast, in the non-government schools, all of which claimed to have low teacher turnover, the emphasis was much more on avoiding disciplinary action and using other strategies, such as staff development, to deal with the issue to teacher quality. Indeed all the non-government heads demonstrated a commitment to in-service education which was not nearly so apparent in any of the government schools.

In other respects, however, there are similarities in the ways in which schools manage their teaching staff. All have supervisory processes, which, at least in theory centre around visiting classrooms and the ubiquitous process of 'checking copies', that is to say looking regularly at pupils' books and teachers' comments on them. The government heads do these things themselves, the non-government heads delegate them to a greater or lesser degree. This raises another important difference between government and non-government schools. While the former have systems of 'teachers in charge', these teachers receive no extra payment and they do not seem to have much delegated power, although this issue needs further investigation. In contrast, all the non-government schools have organisational structures which, although they differ in detail, all involve the explicit delegation of management tasks and are reflected in the formal salary differentiation in relation to levels of responsibility. There also seems to

be a greater emphasis in non-government schools on facilitating teacher meetings, often using Saturdays for meetings between teachers and between teachers and parents (government schools teach on Saturdays). Finally, non-government schools are more likely to have developed teacher appraisal systems of various degrees of formality which generally go beyond the basic core of class visiting and checking of copies and seem to be more rigorous than the generally discredited Annual Confidential Review to which all civil servants, including government teachers, are subject.

Taken together these dimensions of teacher management create a picture where non-government heads are more likely to express a set of positive values in relation to teacher management ['We have created collegial atmosphere' (school B); 'I delegate work and give it to those people whom I trust . . . what we have all decided together' (school A)], whereas images of control are much more likely to come from government schools ['I feel here is something lacking in the teacher' . . . then I become strict with the teacher not with the students . . . Sometimes warning, sometimes checking, sometimes punishment by marking red on the mater roll' (school D)]. It is not being argued, and could not be argued from the evidence available so far, that non-government heads never use such controlling methods or that government heads do not attempt to achieve collegial relationships. The point is that, in their interviews, heads from the two sectors used different images and emphasised different aspects of their role in relation to the management of teachers.

Demands Constraints and Choice: Managing the Curriculum

The situation in relation to curriculum management is different from that for teacher management. Both government and non-government schools are required to teach the government-prescribed syllabus and use prescribed textbooks. For the government heads to whom we spoke that seems to be that. Either no attempt is made to adapt the curriculum to the needs of the school ['I can't do anything' (school F)] or attempts fail, for example where headteacher D had written requests to change the textbooks ignored.

In contrast, while recognising the constraints imposed by legislation, the stronger sense to empowerment among non-government heads leads to a willingness to find ways of managing the situation creatively, although the pressures are recognised. In the words of one head: 'We do keep to the syllabus but how we get there is up to us . . . There is a lot of government pressure but we have ways of getting around that . . . we cheat along the way' (A). The pressures of government regulations in this area came

through in another interview where the head initially said she had no power over the curriculum, but then on reflection, changed her position considerably: 'I can reinforce my curriculum... by way of not deletions or additions to the curriculum as such, but I can get in more textbooks to supplement the curriculum, to step a little away from the curriculum... If we need to extend the curriculum or reinforce it, I think we have got all the power for that and we do it' (C).

More generally, the differences between government and non-government schools are reflected in the heads' responses to questions about the kinds of innovations they have been able to institute in their schools. Two of the government heads could not think of any; the third (school D, of course) identified fairly small scale changes such as the introduction of computer and keeping children at break to help cope with discipline problems. These are not insignificant in the circumstances, but two of the longer-serving non-government heads identified much more radical changes, such as the creation 'councils' to manage certain policy issues, rationalisation of the curriculum (both school B), the abolition of terminal examinations to increase curriculum time and the introduction of informal teaching methods in the lower classes (both school A). Two points are significant about these latter changes. First, they address fundamental issues relating to the core tasks of the school. Secondly, the curriculum changes take advantage of the fact that innovation is easier in the earlier years of schooling, an opportunity which is not available to the government schools which cover the secondary years only. This point is important. There is agreement among heads in both sectors that curriculum innovation becomes more difficult as the final examination approaches. The heads of both non-government school B and government school D, for example, indicated Class VIII as the point beyond which change was extremely difficult.

Conclusion

This research is still underway. However, a number of issues are emerging which need to be investigated further. First, on the basis of our small sample there seem to be systematic differences in the power which heads have in government and non-government schools. Is this generally true, and in particular, is our sample of non-government schools representative in this respect? Second, there may be differences in general managerial style, particularly in relation to the management of teachers which is a product both of the specific powers which heads are granted and the broader culture of the system within which the school is situated. To explore this issue further we need to know much more about the

'system culture' and about management style and culture within the schools. Third, even in the government sector some heads do seem to feel more empowered than others. How many such heads are there, and what are the factors which influence this? The idea of 'performance efficacy' — 'the conviction that... they are capable of improving students achievement through their actions' (Chapman and Burchfield, 1994) seems highly relevant here. Finally, do heads in different school situations prefer to use some management levers rather than others. This paper suggests some of the main areas where such levers may be felt to exist. In each of these areas heads will presumably develop management strategies in response to their perception of their freedom and constraints imposed on them by the system in which they work and of the expectations of stakeholders, as well as their own experience and values.

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NOTES

1. Initially five schools were chosen. However, the head of one government school (School E) has transferred after he had been interviewed. The position concerning a replacement remained uncertain so a further government school (School F) was added, although the first interview with the head of School E was retained in the data set.
2. School F is not one of the 14 but has a close relationship with the Institute, being used as a satellite Professional Development Centre.

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